

Arlington Storm Water Fee Structure and Rate Changes Frequently Asked Questions

On July 24, 2007 the City Council approved changes to the storm water fee that is billed and collected through Water Utility Bills. These changes will be effective October 1, 2007. The following "Questions and Answers" have been designed to update customers on what the Storm Water Utility Fee is and what it is used for, as well as to describe the upcoming changes.

What is the storm water fee?

It is a monthly fee originally established in the early 1990's to pay for fixing storm water problems.

What is storm water?

Storm water is precipitation that does not infiltrate into the soil and runs off of roofs, roads and other surfaces into constructed storm sewer systems, streams, rivers, and creeks.

What are some of the City's challenges in managing storm water?

The primary storm water management challenges to the City of Arlington include

- increased sources of storm water pollution
- erosion along creeks and streams
- sedimentation in water ways
- flooding
- debris in creeks and streams
- aging infrastructure.

Storm water can carry contaminants such as plastic bags, detergents, nutrients, heavy metals and pollution that can be harmful to the environment. In addition, erosion can contribute to the contaminants contained in storm water runoff, as well as damage residential and commercial property. Aging or inadequately designed infrastructure designed to carry storm water can result in flooding during major storm events. Further, debris that is swept into creeks and waterways during storm events can prevent the proper movement of storm water, adding to flood risks.

What is the city doing to minimize the impact of storm water?

The City of Arlington has a number of programs that specifically target the problems associated with storm water:

- **Inspection and Prevention** – City staff inspect and monitor construction sites to ensure proper controls are in place to minimize runoff. The water in creeks and streams are tested to identify and track contaminants in order to target inspection and prevention efforts and to track storm water quality. City staff also provides information and education programs to residents and business owners regarding steps that can be taken to avoid contributing to storm water problems.
- **Development Planning** – City engineers review design and construction plans to ensure that proper planning for storm water impacts is included in new developments.
- **Infrastructure Construction and Maintenance** – City engineers and maintenance crews work to design new storm water infrastructure and maintain existing storm water infrastructure to handle the flow and volume of storm water.

How is the city's storm water management program funded?

The City of Arlington established a Storm Water Utility System in 1990. The **current** fee structure includes a flat rate for residential properties and a tiered rate structure for commercial properties, as illustrated in the table below.

Residential properties pay \$1.30 per month. Commercial rates vary based on the total square feet of impervious area. The fee is charged to all developed properties within the city limits of Arlington and appears on the monthly water, waste water and solid waste bill statements.

Storm Water Rate Structure

Residential		Monthly Charge
Single Family, Residential/Per Unit		\$ 1.30
Multi-Family, Residential Unit		\$ 0.65
Commercial	Monthly Charge based on square feet	
0-10,000	\$ 6.50	
10,001-50,000	\$ 13.00	
50,001-100,000	\$ 19.50	
100,001-200,000	\$ 39.00	
200,001-350,000	\$ 78.00	
350,001-700,000	\$130.00	
700,001-1,000,000	\$260.00	
Over 1,000,000	\$390.00	

What does impervious area mean?

Impervious area is defined as a surface that is resistant to infiltration by water. Several examples of impervious areas include asphalt or concrete pavement, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks and buildings.

How does the City know the impervious area of a property?

City staff uses aerial photography and a geographic information system to identify and measure impervious area.

What changes will customers see in their storm water fee as a result of the new rate and rate structure?

Under the new fee structure, every property owner will pay the same unit rate based on the amount of impervious area on the property. Based on a study of Arlington residential property, the average square feet of impervious surface is 2800, referred to as an **Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU)**. The new minimum monthly fee adopted by the City Council is \$2.00 per ERU. Residential properties will be billed based on one ERU. The fee for non-residential properties will be determined by dividing impervious area by 2800 and multiplying by \$2.00 – *the result shall be a minimum of 1.*

This fee will be increased each year for the following three years as follows:

October 1, 2008 - \$2.75

October 1, 2009 - \$3.50

October 1, 2010 - \$4.25

What do I do if I think the impervious area calculated by the City is incorrect?

Residential bills cannot be adjusted since all residential properties are charged the minimum fee. A non-residential customer may provide additional information for their property, such as a survey or site plan showing the buildings and parking lot, and city staff will review the information against the aerials used to calculate the impervious area.

Why is my church or school paying a drainage fee?

Churches and schools are not exempt from paying this fee.

Why do I have a drainage fee on one meter and not on all meters?

Sometimes fees for a parcel are placed on one meter rather than splitting the fees among multiple utility accounts on a parcel.

What other changes will customers see related to the storm water fee?

Delinquent Payments:

The City Council has directed that failure to pay storm water fees promptly when due shall subject users to discontinuance of any utility services provided by the City.

Classification of Apartments:

Apartments will be considered non-residential for the purpose of the calculation of the storm water fee.

Credits:

Any non-residential property on which mitigation measures have been taken may be eligible for a credit to the storm water fee. The Director of Public Works and Transportation shall adjust the fee for such properties according to the actual mitigative effect of the measures taken. Best Management Practices (BMPs) that were required as part of development plan approval will not be eligible for such credits. City staff is developing a process for accepting and evaluating mitigative measures for credit consideration. If a non-residential property owner is interested in taking an action to receive a credit, a form is available to alert city staff of the proposed action. City staff will review the proposal and contact the property owner for further information or action.

What does the City plan to do with the additional revenue raised by this fee change?

In addition to the current programs described earlier, the City Council has directed that additional programs identified through the work of a citizen committee be performed. These programs include:

- The completion of a Storm Water Master Plan to document the extent of storm water related problems across the city, the cost of making improvements, and a plan to address these problems.
- The implementation of an additional storm sewer pipe inspection program to identify and begin repairing aging infrastructure.
- Planning for and completing a backlog of small drainage projects that have not been funded in the past.
- Completion of buyouts of selected properties that have fallen victim to repetitive flooding.

- Provision of funding to the Parks Department for litter and debris removal in creeks that run through the City parks system.

Who in the City administers the Storm Water Program and the Storm Water Fee?

Although the fee is billed through the Water Department's utility bill, it is administered by the Public Works and Transportation Department (PWTD). PWTD also administers aspects of the Storm Water Program, along with the Environmental Services Department.

For additional information, please contact 817-459-6567